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our respect?" "Pardon me, sir," said I hastily, "the sublime readings or chantings of Homer in different parts of Greece, at a time when the poet always recited or sung the inspirations of his muse to assembled crowds, and when works of literature could not be circulated by the press, afford no parallel case to the exhibitions of an itinerant artist in these days; and the resemblance will appear still more remote, when it is recollected that we have no evidence that the bard of antiquity took any other means to increase and extend his fame than the simple promulgation of his poems.

"Homer, Sir, travelled with his budget of poesy, not as a circulating adventurer, merely to level contributions on the ignorant, but as a benefactor to his country; to delight the lovers of heroic song, to animate public spirit, and to improve and exalt the national character; and for these advantages, besides the pleasure of pleasing, just and honorable praise was the only reward he sought. The great works of Raphael you have named would doubtless have lost none of their excellence, if, when produced, they had been exposed to the multitude in a booth, and their author had accepted the contributions of individuals for the exquisite feast he had placed before them; but the probability is, that if such had then been the only mode of rewarding the labor of artists, and encouraging their exertions in the grand style, no such works as the Cartoons would have been produced. Born among barbarians or shop-keepers, with no better incitements to the talents which heaven had bestowed upon him than rabble patronage and mountebank celebrity, his name would never have received the addition of Divine, nor would he have left behind him works which, three hundred years after his death, were the admiration of the world.

"It is possible—I will allow that empyricism may subsist, and even thrive by practices upon the folly and ignorance of the world; but the success of the empyrical artist is not the lofty aim of the honorable professor. Because a dexterous impostor can collect around him a senseless multitude, ready with their pence and plaudits, the man of real talents, modest as he is meritorious, is not therefore to defile the art of which he is the ornament, with the unclean practices of the charlatan; to drug all the springs of public intelligence; to blow his horn, and scatter about his billets, to draw into his booth a babbling crowd, whose praise is death to the pride of genius, and whose censure their best commendation. When such men, urged by necessity, or misled by sordid advisers, have descended to these low artifices, the offence must always have been regarded as a public and professional misfortune; and if the offenders were deserving of pity, still more was it due to an art suffering under their inflections. Important benefits, I will admit, may accrue from your system of popular contributions, and many useful projects be promoted by it; but if, when applied to the arts, it cannot be separated from the multifarious contrivances of empyricism; if to establish and support the reputation of every considerable work submitted to public inspection, it is necessary that the artist should attach to his service a motley band of printers, editors, pamphlets, paragraphs, and placarders, as the bellman, trumpeters, and jack-puddings of his train, I fear it will never be my son's happy destiny to add to the glories of our national school.

"In fine, Sir, although I cannot act upon your advice to its full extent, the information you have so kindly communicated is most valuable, and entitled to my best thanks. What course I shall pursue with respect to my dear son, remains to be considered. Possibly before that great question is settled, my opinion may alter, but at present I confess I am inclined to the spade."

On concluding my animadversions on what

this gentleman had termed British patronage, he smiled, no doubt, at my "erroneous mode of thinking;" and too wise to make any reply to observations attributed either to ignorance or folly, and too polite to resent their freedom, very civilly said: "Perhaps, Sir, you may be perfectly right in preferring the spade to the pencil; but as my opinion is not requested on that point, I shall leave it to be decided by your own good sense. I have answered your questions with frankness, and, let me add, with a conscientious regard to truth; for, much as I honor my country, convinced as I am, that, as a nation, it is brave, and wise, and generous, and just, beyond all others, I would by no means go so far as to affirm that it cares one rush about the arts; and therefore, Sir, if we do not think alike, I believe that difference turns chiefly on the question of expediency, namely, whether an artist of the rank which your son aspires to, not having the kind of patronage he might prefer, should lay down his profession, or accept of that which offers, and condescend to use it in the only way in which it is found to be effectual."

Here we parted. You see, Mr. Editor, the dilemma in which I am left, in consequence of my having, unfortunately, consulted two doctors instead of one. In truth, Sir, your good counsel at this moment would be inestimable. "Between two stools," it is said, "the breech often comes to the ground." Save me, I beseech you, from so unseemly a catastrophe.

#### WASHINGTON ALLSTON.

(From the *Forthcoming Cyclopædia of American Literature*.)

Those who had the privilege of a friendship or even an acquaintance with Allston, speak with enthusiasm of his conversational powers. He excelled not only in the matter but the manner of his speech. His fine eye, noble countenance, and graceful gesture were all unconsciously brought into play as he warmed with his subject, and he would hold his hearer by the hour as fixedly with a disquisition on morals as by a series of wild tales of Italian banditti. Allston gave his best to his friends as well as to the public, and some of his choicest literary compositions are doubtless contained in the correspondence he maintained for many years with Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey, Lamb, and others among the best men of his, and of all time.

In an enumeration of the published works of Mr. Allston, the volume of outline engravings from the sketches found in his studio after his decease should be especially commemorated, for it contains some of his most beautiful as well as most sublime conceptions; and as nearly all his paintings, with the exception of the Belshazzar, are the property of private individuals, forms almost the only opportunity accessible to the general public for the enjoyment of his artistic productions. His manner may there be learnt in its precision, strength, grandeur, and beauty.

Of the moral harmony of Allston's daily life, we have been kindly favored with a picture, filled with incident, warm, genial, and thoroughly appreciative, from the pen, we had almost said the pencil, of the artist's early friend in Italy, Washington Irving. It is taken from a happy period of his life, and our readers will thank the author for the reminiscence:—

"I first became acquainted," writes Washington Irving to us, "with Washington Allston, early in the spring of 1805. He had just arrived from France, I from Sicily and Naples. I was then not quite twenty-two years of age—he a little older. There was something, to me, inexpressibly engaging in the appearance and manners of Allston. I do not think I have ever been more completely captivated on a first acquaintance. He was of a light and graceful

form, with large blue eyes and black silken hair, waving and curling round a pale expressive countenance. Everything about him bespoke the man of intellect and refinement. His conversation was copious, animated, and highly graphic; warmed by a genial sensibility and benevolence, and enlivened at times by a chaste and gentle humor. A young man's intimacy took place immediately between us, and we were much together during my brief sojourn at Rome. He was taking a general view of the place before setting himself down to his professional studies. We visited together some of the finest collections of paintings, and he taught me how to visit them to the most advantage, guiding me always to the masterpieces, and passing by the others without notice. 'Never attempt to enjoy every picture in a great collection,' he would say, 'unless you have a year to bestow upon it. You may as well attempt to enjoy every dish in a Lord Mayor's feast. Both mind and palate get confounded by a great variety and rapid succession, even of delicacies. The mind can only take in a certain number of images and impressions distinctly; by multiplying the number you weaken each, and render the whole confused and vague. Study the choice pieces in each collection; look upon none else, and you will afterwards find them hanging up in your memory.'

"He was exquisitely sensible to the graceful and the beautiful, and took great delight in paintings which excelled in color; yet he was strongly moved and roused by objects of grandeur. I well recollect the admiration with which he contemplated the sublime statue of Moses by Michael Angelo, and his mute awe and reverence on entering the stupendous pile of St. Peter's. Indeed the sentiment of veneration so characteristic of the elevated and poetic mind was continually manifested by him. His eyes would dilate; his pale countenance would flush; he would breathe quick, and almost gasp in expressing his feelings when excited by any object of grandeur and sublimity.

"We had delightful rambles together about Rome and its environs, one of which came near changing my whole course of life. We had been visiting a stately villa, with its gallery of paintings, its marble halls, its terraced gardens set out with statues and fountains, and were returning to Rome about sunset. The blandness of the air, the serenity of the sky, the transparent purity of the atmosphere, and that nameless charm which hangs about an Italian landscape, had derived additional effect from being enjoyed in company with Allston, and pointed out by him with the enthusiasm of an artist. As I listened to him, and gazed upon the landscape, I drew in my mind a contrast between our different pursuits and prospects. He was to reside among these delightful scenes, surrounded by masterpieces of art, by classic and historic monuments, by men of congenial minds and tastes, engaged like him in the constant study of the sublime and beautiful. I was to return home to the dry study of the law, for which I had no relish, and, as I feared, but little talent.

"Suddenly the thought presented itself, 'Why might I not remain here, and turn painter?' I had taken lessons in drawing before leaving America, and had been thought to have some aptness, as I certainly had a strong inclination for it. I mentioned the idea to Allston, and he caught at it with eagerness. Nothing could be more feasible. We would take an apartment together. He would give me all the instruction and assistance in his power, and was sure I would succeed.

"For two or three days the idea took full possession of my mind; but I believe it owed its main force to the lovely evening ramble in which I first conceived it, and to the romantic friendship I had formed with Allston. Whenever it recurred to mind, it was always connected

with beautiful Italian scenery, palaces, and statues, and fountains, and terraced gardens, and Allston as the companion of my studio. I promised myself a world of enjoyment in his society, and in the society of several artists with whom he had made me acquainted, and pictured forth a scheme of life, all tinted with the rainbow hues of youthful promise.

"My lot in life, however, was differently cast. Doubts and fears gradually clouded over my prospect; the rainbow tints faded away; I began to apprehend a sterile reality, so I gave up the transient but delightful prospect of remaining in Rome with Allston, and turning painter.

"My next meeting with Allston was in America, after he had finished his studies in Italy; but as we resided in different cities we saw each other only occasionally. Our intimacy was closer some years afterwards, when we were both in England. I then saw a great deal of him during my visits to London, where he and Leslie resided together. Allston was dejected in spirits from the loss of his wife, but I thought a dash of melancholy had increased the amiable and winning graces of his character. I used to pass long evenings with him and Leslie; indeed Allston, if any one would keep him company, would sit up until cock-crowing, and it was hard to break away from the charms of his conversation. He was an admirable story teller, for a ghost story none could surpass him. He acted the story as well as told it.

"I have seen some anecdotes of him in the public papers, which represent him in a state of indigence and almost despair until rescued by the sale of one of his paintings.\* This is an exaggeration. I subjoin an extract or two from his letters to me, relating to his most important pictures. The first, dated May 9, 1817, was addressed to me at Liverpool, where he supposed I was about to embark for the United States:—

"Your sudden resolution of embarking for America has quite thrown me, to use a sea phrase, all aback. I have so many things to tell you of, to consult you about, &c., and am such a sad correspondent, that before I can bring my pen to do its office, 'tis a hundred to one but the vexations for which your advice would be wished, will have passed and gone. One of these subjects (and the most important) is the large picture I talked of soon beginning: the Prophet Daniel interpreting the *hand-writing on the wall* before Belshazzar. I have made a highly finished sketch of it, and I wished much to have your remarks on it. But as your sudden departure will deprive me of this advantage, I must beg, should any hints on the subjects occur to you during your voyage, that you will favor me with them, at the same time you let me know that you are again safe in our good country.

"I think the composition the best I ever made. It contains a multitude of figures and (if I may be allowed to say it) they are without confusion. Don't you think it a fine subject? I know not any that so happily unites the magnificent and the awful. A mighty sovereign surrounded by his whole court, intoxicated with his own state, in the midst of his revellings, palsied in a moment under the spell of a preternatural hand suddenly tracing his doom on the wall before him; his powerless limbs, like a wounded spider's, shrunk up to his body, while his heart, compressed to a point, is only kept from vanishing by the terrific suspense that animates it during the interpretation of his mysterious sentence. His less guilty but scarcely less agitated queen, the panic-struck courtiers and concubines, the splendid and deserted banquet table, the half-arrogant, half-astounded magicians, the holy vessels of the temple (shining as it were in triumph through the gloom), and the calm solemn contrast of the prophet, standing like an animated pillar in the

midst, breathing forth the oracular destruction of the empire! The picture will be twelve feet high by seventeen feet long. Should I succeed in it to my wishes, I know not what may be its fate; but I leave the future to Providence. Perhaps I may send it to America."

"The next letter from Allston which remains in my possession, is dated London, 13th March, 1818. In the interim he had visited Paris, in company with Leslie and Newton; the following extract gives the result of the excitement caused by a study of the masterpieces in the Louvre.

"Since my return from Paris I have painted two pictures, in order to have something in the present exhibition at the British gallery; the subjects, the Angel Uriel in the Sun, and Elijah in the Wilderness. Uriel was immediately purchased (at the price I asked, 150 guineas) by the Marquis of Stafford, and the Directors of the British Institution moreover presented me a donation of a hundred and fifty pounds 'as a mark of their approbation of the talent evinced,' &c. The manner in which this was done was highly complimentary; and I can only say that it was full as gratifying as it was unexpected. As both these pictures together cost me but ten weeks, I do not regret having deducted that time from the Belshazzar, to whom I have since returned with redoubled vigor. I am sorry I did not exhibit Jacob's Dream. If I had dreamt of this success I certainly would have sent it there."

"Leslie, in a letter to me, speaks of the picture of Uriel seated in the Sun. The figure is colossal, the attitude and air very noble, and the form heroic, without being overcharged. In the color he has been equally successful, and with a very rich and glowing tone he has avoided positive colors, which would have made him too material. There is neither red, blue, nor yellow on the picture, and yet it possesses a harmony equal to the best pictures of Paul Veronese."

"The picture made what is called 'a decided hit,' and produced a great sensation, being pronounced worthy of the old masters. Attention was immediately called to the artist. The Earl of Egremont, a great connoisseur and patron of the arts, sought him in his studio, eager for any production from his pencil. He found an admirable picture there, of which he became the glad possessor. The following is an extract from Allston's letter to me on the subject:—

"Leslie tells me he has informed you of the sale of Jacob's Dream. I do not remember if you have seen it. The manner in which Lord Egremont bought it was particularly gratifying—to say nothing of the price, which is no trifle to me at present. But Leslie having told you all about it I will not repeat it. Indeed, by the account he gives me of his letter to you, he seems to have puffed me off in grand style. Well, you know I don't *bribe* him to do it, and 'if they will buckle praise upon my back,' why, I can't help it! Leslie has just finished a very beautiful little picture of Anne Page inviting Master slender into the house. Anne is exquisite, soft and feminine, yet arch and playful. She is all she should be. Slender also is very happy; he is a good parody on Milton's 'linked sweetness long drawn out.' Falstaff and Shallow are seen through a window in the background. The whole scene is very picturesque and beautifully painted. 'Tis his best picture. You must not think this praise the 'return in kind.' I give it, because I really admire the picture, and I have not the smallest doubt that he will do great things when he is once freed from the necessity of painting portraits.\*

"Lord Egremont was equally well pleased with the artist as with his works, and invited him to his noble seat at Petworth, where it was his delight to dispense his hospitalities to men of genius.

\* This picture was lately exhibited in the "Washington Gallery" in New York.

"The road to fame and fortune was now open to Allston; he had but to remain in England, and follow up the signal impression he had made.

"Unfortunately, previous to this recent success he had been disheartened by domestic affliction, and by the uncertainty of his pecuniary prospects, and had made arrangements to return to America. I arrived in London a few days before his departure, full of literary schemes, and delighted with the idea of our pursuing our several arts in fellowship. It was a sad blow to me to have this day-dream again dispelled. I urged him to remain and complete his grand painting of Belshazzar's Feast, the study of which gave promise of the highest kind of excellence. Some of the best patrons of the art were equally urgent. He was not to be persuaded, and I saw him depart with still deeper and more painful regret than I had parted with him in our youthful days at Rome. I think our separation was a loss to both of us—to me a grievous one. The companionship of such a man was invaluable. For his own part, had he remained in England for a few years longer, surrounded by everything to encourage and stimulate him, I have no doubt he would have been at the head of his art. He appeared to me to possess more than any contemporary the spirit of the old masters; and his merits were becoming widely appreciated. After his departure he was unanimously elected a member of the Royal Academy."

"The next time I saw him was twelve years afterwards, on my return to America, when I visited him at his studio at Cambridge, in Massachusetts, and found him, in the grey evening of life, apparently much retired from the world; and his grand picture of Belshazzar's Feast yet unfinished.

"To the last he appeared to retain all those elevated, refined, and gentle qualities which first endeared him to me.

"Such are a few particulars of my intimacy with Allston; a man whose memory I hold in reverence and affection, as one of the purest, noblest, and most intellectual beings that ever honored me with his friendship."

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### ART NEWS FROM ENGLAND.—LETTER 7.

To the Editors of the Crayon:

LONDON, Sept. 23, 1855.

THE question of the conflicting claims of native un-talent and foreign talent, in its bearings artistic and patriotic, is once more raised in London. The case is one which you will already have seen stated in the *Athenæum*, and probably your readers also will have seen it extracted from that paper before this is in type. I state it, therefore, with all brevity; I have only to add that I know nothing of the particulars, save by rumor. Government, it seems, wanted to set up in St. Paul's Cathedral, where the honored bones rest, a Wellington monument at the cost of £5,000. They invited four artists of reputation to compete for the commission by sending in models; stipulating, it is said, that, if none of the models proved satisfactory, none would be commissioned. Two of the artists declined; two, Messrs. Baily and Foley, competed. Government does not accept either of their models, nor their offer to send in fresh ones; but commissions, or is understood to be about to commission, one of the two who had declined competing, namely, the foreign Baron Marochetti. Hence these growls.

\* Anecdotes of Artists.